

Through the Eyes of a Child

Brittany Hicks is a sophomore at West Lauderdale High School. She wants to be a professional writer, and especially enjoys writing poetry. Her inspiration for this poem: "I have friends whose daddies have had to go and fight, and I felt bad for them. I wanted to try and tell the story through their eyes."

My father is gone,
He left one dim night,
To be strong on the battlefield,
To fight the never-ending fight.

He joined the army
With all of his soul,
To defend his country
And its rights to uphold.

I know it is his job
To fight for our nation,
But he has no idea
About the problems I'm facing.

I miss him so much,
He never sees my games.
But I know his duty is greater,
So him I cannot blame.

I dream about him, and I hope
He will soon one day return,
To share the trials of the war
And tell me the things he has learned.

I admire my father
For his bravery,
But I cannot describe how much
I want him home with me.

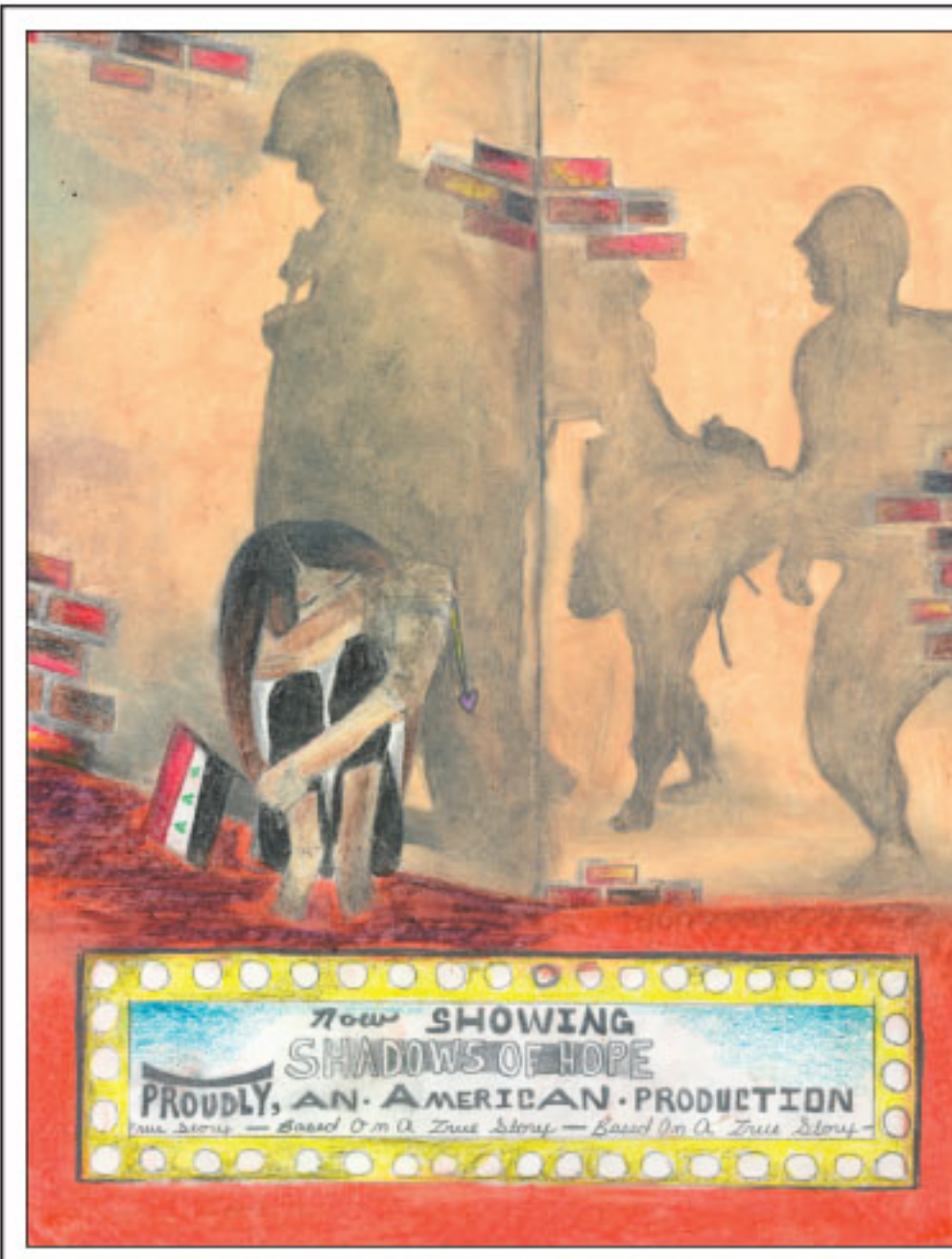
When Ivan came
I was so afraid,
Wishing he was here
So all this storm in my life would fade.

Until the day
He returns home to me,
I will continue to pray
For God's will to be.

— Brittany Hicks



Hicks



MESSAGE OF HOPE

Art students at Northwest Junior High School in Meridian were asked to draw pictures to salute U.S. troops. Here's what Alexandra Riess, a ninth-grader, said about her drawing: "My father, an international airline pilot, takes me to foreign countries where 70 percent of the people are not so fortunate. I had just come back from Buenos Aires, Argentina, when I was assigned this project. Two days before the second semester began, I witnessed an environment of poverty and hope. Therefore, when school started, my emotions for the homeless were still fresh and real. So many people around the world appreciate your service and the hope that you give their country."

ILLUSTRATION BY ALEXANDRA RIESS

What you can do

There are many things we can do to show our appreciation to the families of those who are serving in our military.

While we cannot replace the presence of those who are gone, we can help their families maintain as normal of a life as possible. We can help them cut their grass and attend to other yardwork. We can help them with things such as transportation, routine car maintenance — or even just visiting to check on their needs.

We often overlook the tasks and chores it takes to keep our daily lives going, but these are things that we can do to help those families who make the sacrifice for us.

— Josh Davidson, sophomore
Southeast Lauderdale High School

Dear Jason ...

This letter was submitted by Tiityonah Bell, a seventh-grader at Magnolia Middle School. She is writing to her cousin, Jason Walker.

Thanks for leaving just to help the people in Iraq. Also thanks for being a good cousin. I hope you have a safe trip. Always be safe and stay very brave. I really appreciate everything you've done. All I care about is for you to do your job and be safe. Just remember that your family loves you very much.



Tiityonah Bell

Bell



ILLUSTRATION BY MENTON MCGINNIS

LONGING FOR HOME

Menton McGinnis is a senior at Meridian High School, where she is a cheerleader and a member of the Anchor and Hostess clubs, the National Honor Society and the Spanish Honor Society. Menton takes pointe ballet and watercolor lessons and plays the guitar in her spare time. Her parents are Jim and Cindy McGinnis and she has two siblings, Davis and Caroline. The family attends St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Menton hopes to become a forensic toxicologist. Here's what she said about her painting: "I painted this picture ... thinking of the wonderful colors of the blooms and sensation of smelling the overflowing bouquet of flowers. To a soldier overseas, the sight of these beautiful flowers and the picture of a gorgeous bride must bring tears of joy, fond memories of beauty and elegance, and the longing to be home. I hope that when the soldiers look at my painting, they feel these wonderful feelings and know that everyone at home longs for them to come home just as much as they do."



McGinnis